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## DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

17 May 1985

The Effects of Afghanistan on Indo-Pakistani Relations

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Summary

India and Pakistan both view the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan as a threat to regional security, although for different reasons. Islamabad worries about the potential for Soviet and Indian efforts--separate or joint--to undermine Pakistan's stability. New Delhi fears that the revival of US-Pakistani military ties and the expanded US naval presence in the Indian Ocean will increase superpower competition in a region where India aspires to unchallenged dominance. Despite an early effort by Indira Gandhi to include Pakistan in a regional response to the invasion, the issue of Afghanistan has underscored and even widened the differences that have characterized relations between India and Pakistan since both became independent in 1947.

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This memorandum was prepared by [ ] of the Office of Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis. Comments and queries are welcome and may be addressed to the Chief, South Asia Division, NESAs, [ ] Information as of 15 May 1985 was used in the preparation of this report. [ ]

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Immediately after the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Indira Gandhi --who had just returned to power--tried to persuade President Zia's government to adopt an Indian-sponsored "regional approach" to the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan.

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Indian statements around that time suggest that Indira sought to form a regional group to exert diplomatic pressure on the Soviets to confine their activities to Afghanistan. New Delhi probably also believed--as many Indians still do--that if the Soviets felt secure in Afghanistan, they might be inclined eventually to withdraw their troops. We do not believe that New Delhi contemplated publicly opposing the Soviet invasion.

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New Delhi probably also hoped a regional approach would head off renewed Pakistani military involvement with the United States and the potential threat of a superpower confrontation in South Asia.

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senior Indian officials believed the extent of the threat posed to India and the region by the Soviet invasion would depend on whether Pakistan became a "buffer state" or whether it became a "confrontation state" by accepting major military help from outside powers, allowing foreign bases on its soil, or engaging in "provocative actions" toward the Soviets. In the Indian view, even with outside help, Pakistan would be incapable of confronting the Soviet Union militarily--an argument New Delhi continues to advance in urging Washington to limit arms supplies to Pakistan.

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Islamabad's reaction negated Indian President Reddy's plan to announce the "regional response" proposal in Parliament in January 1980. Pakistani officials characterized India's plan to US diplomats as "hegemonistic," and instead accepted US offers of arms to counter the Soviet threat from Afghanistan. We do not know precisely how or when Islamabad advised the Indians of its unwillingness to go along with Indira's suggestion, but New Delhi's public reaction was strongly negative. In India's view, the arms Islamabad has secured from the United States since the invasion make it more likely that Pakistan's "irrational" leaders will again wage war on India, despite New Delhi's military advantage.

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In response to Indian arguments that Pakistan's acquisitions of US arms threatened India, Zia in 1981 proposed a nonaggression pact with New Delhi. We believe the proposal was designed in part to reassure Washington of Pakistan's goodwill toward India and to improve relations with India as a lever against the Soviets.

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Despite skepticism about Pakistan's motives, Indira Gandhi agreed to high-level bilateral talks on the nonaggression pact in late 1982. The meetings eased tensions, but also resulted in a deadlock that has yet to be resolved. In their counterproposal, the Indians insisted on conditions that Pakistan saw as impinging on Islamabad's sovereignty; Pakistan would have foregone the right to take disputes to the United Nations and committed itself never to allow foreign bases on its territory.

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[redacted]

The two countries agreed to establish working-level joint commissions to promote normalization of ties, and talks have taken place intermittently between high-level as well as working level foreign ministry officials. Zia met with Indira several times, and has already met with Rajiv twice--at the funerals of Indira and Chernenko. The two foreign secretaries also meet from time to time at meetings of regional organizations, the Nonaligned Movement, and the UN. No high-level meetings have been held between military officials, although the two sides generally abide by an informal agreement to keep each other informed about military exercises. [redacted]

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New Delhi continues to parry Pakistani initiatives on a nonaggression pact by pushing only for progress on trade and cultural exchanges until tensions have eased. Many influential Indians believe the 1972 Simla Agreement--in which Indira Gandhi and then-President Bhutto agreed to settle their countries' differences through bilateral negotiations, refrain from hostile propaganda, and avoid meddling in each other's domestic affairs--is the most realistic basis for normalization. [redacted]

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New Delhi, in our view, wants to maintain at least the appearance of cooperation on a nonaggression pact. The Indians want to bolster their image of reasonableness and statesmanship as leaders of the Nonaligned Movement, to remind Moscow that India is pursuing its own foreign policy line, and to avoid complicating India's relations with the Gulf Arabs by appearing hostile to a Muslim state. [redacted]

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Over the past three years, New Delhi's suspicion of Pakistani involvement with Sikh extremists in Punjab has emerged as the major impediment to a breakthrough in bilateral relations. The Indians apparently have surmised--in our view, correctly--that Zia is even more eager than they to pursue bilateral normalization, in part because he believes the military balance strongly favors India. By restarting normalization talks with Islamabad only after Zia agreed to put on trial two groups of Sikhs who had hijacked Indian airliners to Pakistan in 1981 and 1984, Rajiv signaled that he probably will continue to link progress toward normalization with Islamabad's stance on the Sikh issue. Indira Gandhi last summer broke off talks at least partly to protest Pakistan's handling of the last Sikh hijacking and its media treatment of Indian Government actions in Punjab. Rajiv may well do likewise if he decides Islamabad's actions toward or statements on the Sikhs threaten his domestic management of the problem. [redacted]

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For its part, Islamabad still fears that India's desire for regional preeminence threatens Pakistan's survival. From Pakistan's point of view, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, coupled with Moscow's close ties with New Delhi, raises the threat of Indo-Soviet collaboration to weaken Pakistan--a development we consider unlikely because of divergent Indian and Soviet equities in South Asia. Some Pakistanis are aware that New Delhi wants Pakistan to remain intact as a buffer against Soviet-occupied Afghanistan, but many still worry that Moscow will somehow manipulate India to attack Pakistan. Pakistanis also are concerned that India might take advantage of tension along the Pakistani-Afghan border to intimidate Pakistan or that India might launch a preemptive strike against Pakistan's nuclear facilities. [redacted]

[redacted]

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